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Joshua D. Freilich

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Steven M. Chermak, Joshua D. Freilich and Zachary Shemtob

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LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING AND THE DOMESTIC FAR RIGHT

STEVEN M. CHERMAK

Michigan State University

JOSHUA D. FREILICH

ZACHARY SHEMTOB

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY

This article examines issues related to training as it pertains to domestic terrorism in general and responding to far-right extremists in particular. First, it highlights current training practices and training focused on the far right. Second, it details knowledge about the nature and extent of the threat posed by far-right extremists. Third, a review of the empirical research indicates that training could be enhanced if three key issues are emphasized: Future training should promote a better understanding of the contours of the far right; discuss the unique geographic, crime-incident, and structural characteristics of the far right; and describe the need to examine all ideologically motivated crimes, regardless of whether they are also defined as *terrorist*. The conclusion discusses how training could be enhanced by strategically integrating the existing knowledge base.

Keywords: domestic terrorism; far-right extremism; political violence; law enforcement training

Policy concerns about terrorism have varied over time. Typically, a focusing event or a series of events—such as a bombing, hijacking, or assassination—opens a window of opportunity for policy development and change (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Birkland, 2004; Kingdon, 1995; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Kingdon (1995) argues that such events create “opportunities for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problems” (p. 173). For example, after Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and killed 168 people, law enforcement focused attention on homegrown terrorists in general and paramilitary militias in particular. Congressional hearings were held, and sweeping federal terrorism legislation was passed (Chermak, 2002).

The power of a focusing event to set and shape the policy agenda was displayed after the attacks of September 11. These attacks widely affected society—especially, the political, public, private, and financial sectors—as well as terrorism scholarship. First, many scholars began applying their discipline-specific expertise to terrorism. Second, the amount of funds available for research increased. The Department of Homeland Security’s Centers of Excellence Program, for example, increased the amount of money available for terrorism research and sought to fuse scholarship from different disciplines to focus on preventing and responding to specific threats.

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Almost everywhere in the world, the primary objective of terrorism policy is prevention (Falkenrath, 2001). The United States has a broad preparedness program that attempts to “reduce the vulnerability of American society . . . by improving operational response capabilities across the country, at all levels of government” (p. 147). It is beyond the scope of this article to review all the prevention efforts undertaken to deter potential terrorists, investigate successful plots, discourage the emergence or growth of new groups, and harden targets. Note, though, that law enforcement plays a central role in most counterterrorism prevention efforts; thus, it is not surprising that law enforcement reinvented itself after September 11. Law enforcement agencies invested in preparedness training, purchased equipment, and examined disaster scenarios with a range of organizations. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies devoted substantial resources to prevent and combat terrorism. Some examples include the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the restructuring of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the growing momentum to institutionalize intelligence fusion centers in every state, and the efforts to coordinate activities globally and across the fragmented structure of U.S. law enforcement.

All law enforcement, regardless of jurisdiction or government level, must be effectively trained to contribute to U.S. prevention efforts. Law enforcement officers must know how to identify signs of terrorism, share useful intelligence with other agencies, and develop strategies that respond to the threats their agencies face. Researchers from the Police Executive Research Forum explain that reorienting the law enforcement mission with its focus on the prevention of terrorism is “complex and unprecedented” (Murphy & Plotkin, 2003, p. 71) and that training is essential. In a series of white papers, Murphy and Plotkin (2003) focused on how to best protect communities from terrorism, and they concluded that officers do not know enough about terrorism because “street-level officers and investigators are given little guidance about what to look for and may not realize when they come across information that could reveal a potential terrorist act” (p. 72). To effectively develop sound terrorism policies, policy makers need to understand the threat and implement strategies that fit the nature of the threat.

Training curriculum on any terrorism-related topic should reflect the best knowledge and practices available, as demonstrated by empirical evidence. This is challenging because the size and scope of terrorism research has rapidly increased post-September 11. It is difficult to translate this emerging body of scholarship quickly, clearly, and consistently with training requirements and planning issues to trainers. This challenge is not unique, and scholars regularly discuss the knowledge divide between practice and empirical knowledge related to criminal justice decisions (Sherlock & Dantzker, 1997). Latessa, Cullen, and Gendreau (2002) refer to the rejection of scientific knowledge, training, and expertise by professionals as quackery: “It embraces the notion that interventions are best rooted in ‘common sense,’ in personal experiences, . . . in tradition, and in superstition. ‘What works’ is held to be ‘obvious,’ derived from years of an individual’s experience, and legitimized by an appeal to custom” (p. 43). Many current policies, practices, and training curricula are therefore not rooted in empirical knowledge. Academics contribute to this divide by writing solely for other academics, usually in language that practitioners find unclear. Furthermore, empirical findings are often inconsistent, presented ideologically (Latessa et al., 2002), and reported in obscure venues.

This knowledge divide between researchers and practitioners has recently shown signs of closing. Both groups increasingly collaborate to exchange ideas and expertise and thus dually contribute to the adoption of policies, strategic interventions, and training

curriculum that are grounded in extant research (see Chemers & Reed, 2005; McEwen, 2004; Sperber, Hanley, & Henderson-Hurley, 2005). Accordingly, there is a growing synthesis of findings related to various types of interventions, as well as an increased acknowledgment of the importance of not only integrating evidence-based practices into policy decisions but also strengthening relationships between practitioners and the academic community (Chemers & Reed, 2005). There is also increasing attention paid to the best practices in various fields, the development of processes to constantly refine and improve implemented programs and strategies, and the identification of the characteristics of successful partnerships (Andrews et al., 1990; Goldstein, 1990; Harland, 2000; Latessa et al., 2002; McEwen, 2004; Sherman, 1997; Shernock & Dantzker, 1997; Zimmermann, 2006). One example of an evaluation of these partnerships is McEwen's study (2004) of the Locally Initiated Research Partnership Program, to promote research evaluation and partnerships between academics and law enforcement in the area of community policing. In addition, Project Safe Neighborhoods—a program designed to improve the response to gun violence and implemented in all 94 U.S. Attorney districts—involves local task forces of governmental, criminal justice, and community officials. These individuals collaborate with local research partners to better understand the etiology of gun violence and help to develop strategies to respond in problem areas (McGarrell, 2005).

Although law enforcement's role in preventing terrorism has changed and despite some research examining terrorism and law enforcement, terrorism-related training as focused on the domestic far right remains relatively unexplored. This article provides a first step to address this gap; it identifies training issues that could better prepare law enforcement to effectively respond to the threat posed by the domestic far right. Most individuals who subscribe to the belief system of the domestic far right are law-abiding and not dangerous. As we demonstrate below, however, some far-right individuals go beyond holding ideological beliefs and commit crimes to further their ideological views. It therefore behooves law enforcement to be aware of which crimes far rightists are motivated to commit and when and in which situations they are likely to do so.

The article is divided into three sections. First, it reviews some key terrorism training programs—especially, programs related to terrorism and far-right extremism. Second, it examines the threat posed by far-right extremists. Finally, it discusses the issues that should be emphasized in any training focused on the far right, as indicated by existing empirical research.

TERRORISM TRAINING

Although law enforcement, watch groups, and researchers have concluded that far-right extremists pose a significant threat to public safety, there is little training that focuses on the far right. We evaluated the following sources to assess the current training offered post-September 11. First, we researched published documents related to training (Begert, 1998; Reese, 2006). Second, we downloaded training reports and documents on the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Law Enforcement Training Database (<http://bjatraining.aspensys.com>) and at the Counter-Terrorism Resource Page (<http://www.counterterrorismtraining.gov>). The latter contains training materials from the FBI, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Third, we searched the Web sites of key federal agencies, training organizations, and watchdog organizations for information

about their training programs. Fourth, we discussed the topics and priorities of training with key informants in law enforcement and academia who had extensive experience in law enforcement preparation and are currently involved in training law enforcement in terrorism.

Note that terrorism training existed well before September 11. The RAND Corporation conducted the most complete pre–September 11 assessment of issues related to training and preparedness (Riley & Hoffman, 1995). Its report surveyed state and local law enforcement agencies to better understand the terrorist threat; it detailed collaboration, opportunities, and obstacles; and it charted preparedness for antiterrorism and counterterrorism incidents. Two types of training were discussed: antiterrorism and counterterrorism. Antiterrorism training was defined as measures “taken to prevent terrorism acts from occurring,” and counterterrorism, as “monitoring and analyzing terrorist threats, as well as responding to terrorist acts once they have been committed” (p. 38).

Counterterrorism and antiterrorism training were provided by 23% of local law enforcement agencies and 30% of state law enforcement agencies. In addition, more than 70% of the local departments “received terrorism training from either the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, the Department of Energy, the U.S. Army, or private agencies and professional associations” (p. 39). Furthermore, 40% of the agencies received terrorism training on a one-time or as-needed basis; 38% received training every 1 or 2 years; and 21% refreshed their terrorism training every 3 to 5 years. The training was provided to only a small number of officers in each department, given that 83% of the departments had 20 or fewer officers trained in antiterrorism and counterterrorism methods.

A recent Congressional Research Service report echoed many of the Rand assessment’s findings. According to this report, counterterrorism training programs are provided by many federal agencies and departments (directly or through collaboration with other institutions, such as universities), including homeland security, defense, energy, health and human services, justice, transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency (Reese, 2006). These agencies train a variety of government personnel, first responders, and various sectors involved in protecting critical infrastructures. The training programs provided by the departments of transportation and energy and the Environmental Protection Agency focus on strengthening the protection of critical infrastructures in each sector. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency provides terrorism-related training related to the protection of water, waterways, and wastewater. The departments of defense and homeland security train personnel responsible for responding to a terrorist attack regardless of location or target; the Department of Health and Human Services prepares medical and public health personnel for disasters (with a focus on attacks by chemical, biological, and radiological weapons of mass destruction); and the Department of Justice is responsible for training law enforcement personnel. Federal agencies significantly revised their agency-specific training related to terrorism after September 11. The FBI transformed itself, for instance, from a federal law enforcement agency to the lead domestic terrorism agency (Falkenrath, 2001; Walker, 2002). Preventing and managing critical terrorism incidents has become the most important mandate of the FBI, and it has revised its training accordingly. These changes are discussed in detail at its Web site (<http://www.fbi.gov>) but include the following: significantly expanding the training curriculum on terrorism, adding training personnel, increasing the number of required training hours, and retraining veteran agents. The FBI has increased agents training in the area of intelligence, adding 24 required hours in intelligence and 40 additional training hours in counterterrorism. Some of the classes include Counterintelligence

Operations for Special Agents, Counterintelligence Operations for Analysts, Terrorist Financing, Counterintelligence Asset Development, and Basic International Terrorism.

The programs and training curricula of the departments of homeland security and justice are examined in more detail because they are the lead agencies responsible for training law enforcement personnel from various agencies. Although Homeland Security uses a large number of organizations and agencies to accomplish its training goals (e.g., the National Fire Academy, the Emergency Management Institute), the training of federal law enforcement officers is provided primarily at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. More than 80 federal agencies use these training services, and the center provides basic, advanced, and agency-specific training on many topics. For example, it lists 95 advanced training programs at its Web site (<http://www.fletc.gov>), almost 20 of which are directly or indirectly related to terrorism. Terrorism topics include intelligence awareness, counterterrorism, critical infrastructure protection, crisis management, suicide bombing mitigation, and training related to weapons of mass destruction.

Although domestic terrorism is embedded within many of the listed programs, there are only two stand-alone advanced training courses related to it: first, domestic terrorism and hate-crimes training; second, an online hate-crimes training program. Both of these courses focus on hate crimes and organized hate-crimes groups. For example, the curriculum topics of the domestic and hate-crimes training course includes the recognition of organized hate groups, international terrorism, the investigation of hate crimes, and the various strategies to respond to these groups.

The Department of Justice also uses a variety of agencies, organizations, and partnerships to fulfill its training mission. Training is provided by the FBI, by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and by the National White Collar Crime Center (Reese, 2006). One of the most important training courses is the State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT) program, which is funded by a grant from the Institute of Intergovernmental Research and sponsored by the FBI and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The SLATT program has provided antiterrorism training since 1996, focusing on training for

the prevention of terrorism in the United States by providing the tools necessary for state and local law enforcement officers to understand, detect, deter, and investigate acts of terrorism in the United States by both international and domestic, or homegrown terrorists. (Institute for Intergovernmental Research, 2006, para. 2)

Since September 11, its focus has been on the development of training related to the response of foreign-inspired terrorism. As the program states,

SLATT increased training offerings in foreign-inspired terrorism, addressing specific groups and organizations that may pose a danger to America going forward. SLATT also identified an increase in violent acts linked to various special-interest groups and incorporated this aspect into the training curricula and research activities. (Institute for Intergovernmental Research, 2006, para. 3)

Most of the SLATT training programs focus on international terrorism. As listed on its Web site (<https://www.slatt.org>), sample courses include Jihadist Operations, Law Enforcement Guide to Arabic Culture and Islam, and Understanding Terrorism in the Middle East. Similar to the topics offered at Federal Law Enforcement Training Center,

several courses indirectly include training on domestic terrorism. SLATT lists only two courses, however, that focus solely on domestic terrorism: Domestic Terrorism and Special-Interest/Anarchist Groups. The Domestic Terrorism course focuses on right-wing extremists, examining “investigative, response, and officer safety strategies for agency use in identifying and managing domestic extremist cases” (see <https://www.slatt.org/training.aspx>).

Although university researchers, regional community policing institutes, and other agencies provide terrorism training, few systematic programs exist that focus on domestic terrorism. The two organizations that do provide a significant amount of training on issues related to domestic terrorism (especially focused on far-right organizations) are the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center. The Anti-Defamation League (2006), for example, provides numerous courses on extremism awareness and training. This training overviews the antigovernment movement, hate crimes, legal issues, and officer safety issues. In addition, the ADL provides an advanced training course called Extremist and Terrorist Threats, which is frequently offered to law enforcement agencies across the country. This course covers issues such as domestic and international terrorism, from right- and left-wing domestic terrorists to al Qaeda, Hezbollah, and their affiliates. The Anti-Defamation League conducted more than 20 training courses on extremist activities in 2006, offering courses in Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana, Missouri, Florida, Massachusetts, and Tennessee. The Southern Poverty Law Center does not appear to train law enforcement quite as frequently; it generally provides extremist law enforcement training only when requested to do so by an agency or organization. The center has recently partnered with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, however, to offer its online course related to hate crimes, hate groups, and the role of the police in responding to these crimes.

Interestingly, little has been written about the process of constructing training curriculum; thus, systematically examining this process should be an important consideration for future research. Although most research on training focuses on how it is an important transmitter of knowledge and a way to standardize practices across the fragmented law enforcement system (Crank, 1996), few scholars focus on the creation and development of training. Scholars note that core police training is increasingly based on extant empirical knowledge (Shernock & Dantzker, 1997), but additional research is necessary in the areas of development and refinement of advanced training topics.

Of course, there are obstacles to integrating the research knowledge base into terrorism training practices. Training periods are limited by time and resources; thus, training practitioners have the discretion to highlight particular issues and ignore others. More important, their practical experience with the subject matter critically shapes the final product. Once a curriculum is developed and delivered, it is difficult to alter the protocol to reflect any significant recent findings. This is problematic in the area of terrorism because, historically, most terrorism research is unempirical; in fact, research indicates that less than 5% of terrorism articles are empirically based (Lum, Kennedy, & Sherley, 2006; Merari, 1991; Silke, 2001). Although the academics and law enforcement personnel who construct these trainings are engaged in the literature, the integration of best practices and extant empirical findings is cumbersome because research is dynamic and changing. Thus, we illustrate the value of systematically integrating research into training curriculum on far-right extremism, terrorism,

and political crimes. Furthermore, we base our conclusions on an evaluation of the extant research on far-right extremism.

THE THREAT OF FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM

Many law enforcement officials, academics, and watch groups claim that domestic far-right extremists continue to pose a significant threat to national security (Freilich, Pichardo-Almanzar, & Rivera, 1999; Pitcavage, 2001), which underscores the need for the development of training programs on this topic. Within the United States, domestic terrorism attacks generally outnumber international ones 7 to 1, and far-right groups are especially dangerous (LaFree, Dugan, Fogg, & Scott, 2006). Hewitt (2003) found that right-wing terrorism has claimed more than 250 lives since 1978 and that the two most likely future domestic threats come from Islamic terrorists and far-right extremists. Freilich and Chermak's ongoing U.S. Extremist Crime Database study (2009; see also Gruenewald, Freilich, & Chermak, 2009) has identified more than 275 homicide incidents committed by far-right extremists since 1990, causing more than 530 fatalities. Far rightists have also killed more than 47 law enforcement and private security personnel in the line of duty in more than 35 incidents (Freilich & Chermak, 2009). The number of attacks committed by the far right has increased, and some scholars conclude that far-right extremists (especially, groups motivated by religious ideology) are strong candidates to commit future acts using weapons of mass destruction (Gurr & Cole, 2002; Tucker, 2001).

Local and state law enforcement agencies have also concluded that the domestic far right poses a major threat. When asked what types of terrorist groups were located within their state, 85% of state law enforcement agencies indicated that right-wing groups were present. In addition, 82% cited race/ethnicity/hate-related groups, and 74% reported that single-issue special interest groups operated within their jurisdiction. Many far-right groups are race/ethnicity/hate-related groups (e.g., the Ku Klux Klan, skinheads); thus, these results indicate that a significant presence of the far right in most states (Riley, Treverton, Wilson, & Davis, 2005). Carlson's survey (1995) of police chiefs, from 140 U.S. cities with a population of more than 100,000, asked respondents to rank the top four groups that, in their opinion, were most likely to commit a terrorist act within the next 2 years. Antiabortion perpetrators and White supremacists were rated the two greatest threats, ahead of Middle Eastern terrorists and all other groups (see also Riley & Hoffman, 1995; Riley et al., 2005; Stenz, 1990).

In 1999, the FBI distributed an influential report titled *Project Megiddo*, a strategic threat assessment concerning domestic terrorism in anticipation of the new millennium. The report concluded that elements of the domestic far right might be willing to perpetrate violence to further their belief system and thereby usher in the end of the world. Besides September 11, the most lethal attack that has occurred on American soil is the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Other case-specific examples of the far-right threat have included Eric Rudolph's bombings at the 1996 Olympic games at Centennial Park, attacks at abortion clinics and gay bars, the Sons of Gestapo train derailment, and Matt Hale's plan to murder a federal judge.

More important, these right-wing terrorist and criminal activities represent the proverbial tip of the iceberg. The Intelligence Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center has

identified 60 terrorist plots involving far-right extremists since the Oklahoma City bombing (Blejwas, Griggs, & Potok, 2005). These plots targeted political and public officials for assassination; threatened the general populous using biological and chemical weapons; and cited churches, federal buildings, clinics, public utilities, and modes of transportation as worthy targets of arsons and bombings. One example is the arrest and conviction of William Krar, a White supremacist and antigovernment extremist. Krar pled guilty to possession of a weapon of mass destruction after the FBI discovered he possessed sodium cyanide, more than 500,000 rounds of ammunition, and nearly 70 pipe bombs. Krar had enough cyanide to kill several thousand people, but his case received only limited national attention (Axtman, 2003; Blejwas et al., 2005).

Although actors and groups from social movements (e.g., Islamic jihadists) and elements of the domestic far left (e.g., ELF; ALF) also pose a significant threat to public safety, we limit the focus of this article to the domestic far right, for three reasons. First, the presentation had to be manageable to effectively illustrate the value of integrating research knowledge into training practice. The approach has a wide application, however, and can therefore enhance training curricula related to international and other domestic terrorist groups. Second, prior research indicates that right-wing terrorists differ in important ways from left-wing terrorists and international terrorists, thus making it important to tailor training to the unique characteristics of terrorist groups. Third, by focusing on the far-right's activities, we can make significant policy-relevant comparisons, especially in terms of law enforcement training. These issues include variations by type of group (e.g., militias versus neo-Nazis), by organizing principle (e.g., hierachal public versus underground cells and lone wolves), and by type of crime.

RESEARCH, POLICY, TRAINING, AND THE DOMESTIC FAR RIGHT

Since summer 2005, we have reviewed 300 studies on far-right wing extremism and political crimes in the fields of criminology, political science, psychology, and sociology (Freilich, Chermak, & Gamarra, 2006). This ongoing review indicates that most studies do not use empirical data, but this rather large body of research still offers intriguing insights that are useful for policy makers and law enforcement to keep in mind as they wrestle with combating the danger posed by far-right extremism. Here, we discuss three critical issues for policy and law enforcement training: first, the contours of the far-right; second, the unique geographic, crime-incident, and structural characteristics of the far right; and, third, the need to examine all ideologically motivated crimes, regardless of whether they are also defined as *terrorist*.

THE CONTOURS OF THE FAR RIGHT

It is problematic that the far right is usually treated as a single cohesive entity. Scholars, policy makers, and practitioners often look at one segment of the movement and make conclusions about it as a whole. Certain scholars, conversely, call for careful attention to nuance. Indeed, the term *domestic far right* may be unhelpful because the movement is composed of different segments that disagree about fundamental issues, such as racism and anti-Semitism, their level of political engagement, the nature of conspiracy theories, religion (atheism of

Metzger versus Christian Identity), economic policies, and organizing structure (public hierachal entities versus underground cells and lone wolves; Chermak, 2002; Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997; Durham, 2000; Freilich, Pienik & Howard, 2001; Mariani, 1998; Pitcavage, 2003).

The amount and types of crime committed by far-right groups vary as much as the groups themselves. These variations have important implications for law enforcement strategies. The John Birch Society explicitly rejects racism and anti-Semitism; it does not engage in paramilitary training; and it is unaffiliated with a particular religious sect. This is quite different from the Christian Identity movement, which makes racism and anti-Semitism the central plank of its religious theology and is thus considerably more dangerous. Both these groups are also different from the World Church of the Creator and the Odinist movement. These differences are important because various segments of the movement could represent different types of threats. For example, far-right lone wolves may commit crimes that are different from those of organized far-right groups or far-right perpetrators who act with others but are not part of a group. Far-right crimes that are more clearly terrorist, such as antigovernment bombings, appear more likely to be the work of established far-right groups. Yet, lone wolves or far rightists acting with others but not as part of an established group tend to commit violent but nonterrorist crimes (such as hate crimes against minorities) as well as nonviolent crimes (such as tax refusal and other financial schemes). It is important for law enforcement to systematically document these differences and for researchers to better explain them so that they can allocate their resources effectively.

Accordingly, law enforcement needs to understand the contours of the far right and develop an appreciation of the subtle and not-so-subtle differences in the ideology, structure, and criminal activities of its different groups. Such appreciation might make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful confrontation and investigation.

The FBI's failure to fully understand David Koresh's biblical interpretations during the Waco standoff of 1993, for example, had far-reaching consequences. Koresh, the charismatic religious leader of the Branch Davidians, was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for federal firearm violations. This investigation led to a search-and-arrest assault on February 28. There is debate about why this assault went awry, but gunfire was exchanged, bureau agents and Branch Davidians were killed, and a standoff ensued (Chermak, 2002; Reavis, 1995; Tabor & Gallagher, 1995). After negotiations stalled, the standoff ended on April 19 when M-60 tanks were used to breach the compound and insert CS gas (tear gas) into the buildings. More than 70 Branch Davidians died in the ensuing fire, including a number of children.

Koresh's biblical interpretations were shared with law enforcement and published in various media outlets during the standoff, but "unfortunately, neither the FBI agents in charge nor the myriad of advisers upon whom they relied could comprehend their perspective" (Tabor & Gallagher, 1995, p. 3). Tabor and Gallagher (1995) stress, for instance, that the FBI interpreted Koresh's religious rhetoric as evidence of an unwillingness to negotiate and surrender, but

what the authorities apparently never perceived is that Koresh's preaching was to him and to his followers, the only matter of substance and that a "surrender" could only be worked out through dialogue within the biblical framework in which the Branch Davidians lived. (p. 6)

Barkun (1994; see also Jensen & Hsieh, 1999) similarly concluded that the FBI's tunnel vision contributed to the result at Waco. The FBI did not stray from its initial interpretation of Koresh as an irrational cult leader who was holding hostages. After the authorization for the gas attack was given, the FBI never attempted to negotiate, even though just a few days earlier Koresh suggested that he might surrender if his manuscript was made public. Furthermore, law enforcement officials did not take advantage of their earlier experiences dealing with similar extremist groups, such as the Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord. When law enforcement avoids playing into the worst fears of its adversaries, when it reaches out to academics to gain a fuller understanding of the group at issue, and when it works to reduce mistrust (by taking into account the belief/ideological system at issue)—such as in the sieges of the Montana Freemen and the Republic of Texas in 1996 and 1997, respectively—the results were significantly more successful (Barkun, 2002; Rosenfeld, 1997).

Law enforcement must also consider differences within a segment of the movement. Brannan's study (1999) of the Christian Identity Church headed by Dan Gayman found it to differ substantially from the more famous Christian Identity Church headed by Richard Butler. Gayman's theology is consistent with standard Christian Identity beliefs; that is, Gayman embraces the seed-line theory (in which the Bible provides salvation to the White race only), a commitment to the text of the King James Version of the Bible, and the belief that Jews are the Antichrist. However, he diverges sharply from Butler in both his repudiation of violence and his attempts to gain broader social acceptance.

Duffy and Brantley (1997; see also, Jensen & Hsieh, 1999) have encouraged law enforcement agents to be cognizant of nuance when dealing with the militia movement. They advise local enforcement to engage in constructive dialogue with certain militia groups in their jurisdiction to prevent future hostilities. Such nonconfrontational dialogue allows militiamen to humanize the officers, and it enables law enforcement to evaluate and appreciate the nature of seemingly radical individuals. According to Duffy and Brantley, after making the initial contact, officers should try to arrange for future meetings and even inquire about other possible contacts within the organization. To assist local law enforcement in these efforts, the authors created the Militia Threat Assessment Typology, which divides the militia groups into four categories ranging from groups that are not dangerous (Categories 1–2) to groups that present a major threat (Categories 3–4). Law enforcement agents are advised to contact groups that fall with the first two categories.

Effective law enforcement strategies would thus concentrate attention and resources on the Gayman (formerly, Butler) wing of the Christian Identity movement and on militia groups that fall into Categories 3 and 4 of Duffy and Brantley's typology. Law enforcement agencies need to have training that identifies such nuances and discusses how to build an intelligence capacity capable of identifying the specific nature of the threat. Similarly, research finds that public hierachal groups pose less of a threat than do secretive cells and, in some cases, lone wolves (see, e.g., Chermak, 2002; Mariani, 1998). Again, a successful training program would give less attention to the more public groups, despite possible media attention, and instead harness its resources to build bridges with the community to uncover and preempt underground cells.

Variations in the criminal activities of skinheads, for example, are challenging for law enforcement. Baron (1997) interviewed skinheads and concluded that they commit many criminal acts—assaults, robberies, and drug and alcohol offenses—but, surprisingly, most

of their violence was White on White. These findings are consistent with Schafer and Navarro's study (2003) that found significant differences between hate-motivated skinhead groups and criminally motivated skinhead groups. Although the latter occasionally commit bias crimes, their primary focus is to profit through illicit activity. Law enforcement should pay special attention to the more hate-motivated groups, given that they are usually less susceptible to deterrence and considerably more dangerous (especially to minority groups) than mere criminals. These skinhead groups believe that they are operating for a higher purpose, as opposed to personal gain. Although the criminal activities of skinhead groups are thus worthy of law enforcement scrutiny, the types of investigation strategy used would be significantly different owing to their distinct belief systems, organization types, and threat levels. Attention also needs to be paid to other factors, such as the group's level of maturity, because older groups tend to commit more violent acts and have better-developed mythologies. Once again, nuance is important, and understanding these differences will determine the most effective strategy.

THE UNIQUE GEOGRAPHIC, CRIME-INCIDENT, AND STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAR RIGHT

One key issue for prevention is to better document the geographic, behavioral, and structural characteristics that differentiate terrorist groups. Without a doubt, good principles of prevention, intelligence, and investigation have widespread application for responding to all types of terrorist and criminal organizations. Such principles are most likely to have a significant impact when tailored to the nuanced characteristics of particular groups. Unfortunately, law enforcement executives believe that officers are generally unfamiliar with such groups, lack the skills to identify terrorist activity, and are not prepared to respond appropriately (Murphy & Plotkin, 2003). Questions addressed here include the following: Does the threat posed by far-right extremism vary dramatically by location? Do different segments of the far-right commit different types of crimes? Are different investigative approaches needed depending on the structural and operating characteristics of far-right groups at issue?

An important first step in prevention is possessing adequate intelligence about the number, types, and structures of far-right groups and individuals involved in criminal activities within a jurisdiction. Several researchers have stressed the unique characteristics of various terrorist groups and developed typologies based on their distinct characteristics (Crenshaw, 1981; Duffy & Brantley, 1997; Smith 1994). Crenshaw's typology (1981), for example, includes six types of terrorist groups: revolutionaries, nationalists, minority separatists, reformists, anarchists, and reactionaries. Smith's groundbreaking work (1994) on domestic terrorism similarly highlights the different structure, methods, and ideology of right-wing, left-wing, and single-issue terrorists. Prior research also indicates that right-wing terrorists differ in important ways from left-wing terrorists in terms of age, education, gender, occupation, and religion (Handler, 1990; Hewitt, 2003; Smith, 1994).

Also important are the regional differences regarding the presence of and threat posed by far-right groups. Although most police executives across the nation view far-right extremists—particularly, White supremacists and extreme antiabortion activists—as posing a serious threat, police executives from certain regions did not share this concern (Carlson, 1995). For example, when evaluating overall concerns, significantly more executives from Northeastern and North Central police agencies noted the threat of Middle Eastern terrorists than did

executives in the South and West. There were regional disagreements about which types of groups should be listed as the top threat priority: Police executives in the Northeast noted Middle Eastern terrorists; those in the West noted antiabortion and White supremacy groups; and those from the South and North Central agencies noted antiabortion groups.

Research also documents distinct geographic patterning among specific types of groups. For example, Smith (1994) emphasized that right-wing groups base their operations in rural areas and that left-wing groups operate in urban areas. Flint (2001) discussed how the Ku Klux Klan was predominantly a rural phenomenon in the 1920s but that in the 1990s most groups were concentrated in suburban areas. Research has also found variation among terrorist groups in terms of criminal profiles and crimes committed. Handler's review (1990) of FBI documents found that racism drives right-wing ideology and so influences the organizational structures of these organizations and their propensity to commit violent crimes; that is, far-right groups are more likely to have decentralized leadership patterns. Hamm (2005) recently compared the types of crimes committed by international and domestic terrorist groups. His analysis of data from the American Terrorism Study found that international terrorists were statistically more likely to commit aircraft violations, motor vehicle crimes, violations of explosions, and some types of firearms violations. In contrast, domestic terrorists were more likely to commit mail fraud, racketeering, robbery, burglary, and violations of destructive devices. He concluded that his study provides "strong empirical support for the notion that terrorist-oriented criminality has distinguishing features" (p. 22) and that these "different crimes require different skills and opportunities and identifying these differences may take law enforcement a step closer to prevention" (p. 19).

Similarly, Smith and colleagues (Smith, Damphousse, & Roberts, 2006) found that terrorists are much more likely to engage in planning activities and commit preparatory crimes, as compared to traditional criminals, and that the patterns of preparatory conduct vary by type of terrorist group. For example, the researchers found that right-wing terrorist groups are more mobile than international terrorists and so tend to commit crimes farther from home. Smith and colleagues concluded that this finding may be evidence that far-right groups have broader supporter networks, which allow them to freely to move around the country, or it may reflect the fact that far-right terrorists tend to reside in rural locations. Finally, the researchers found that left-wing and international terrorist groups committed many more preparatory crimes, and when calculating distance between incident and preparatory act found that commit their preparatory acts close targets compared to right-wing and single-issue terrorist groups (p. 52). These results led Smith and colleagues to conclude the following:

This finding is consistent with changes in terrorist group tactics in the 1990s. Both the extreme right and single-issue terrorists adopted "unorganized" or "uncoordinated" violence models in the early 1990s. Following the siege at Ruby Ridge, Idaho in the summer of 1992, members of the extreme right were encouraged to adopt the concept of "leaderless resistance." . . . All of these actions were intended to limit recruitment to the "true believers," reduce the possibility of infiltration by undercover law enforcement operatives, and minimize the risk of civil and criminal liability of group leaders. Smaller numbers of known meetings and preparatory activities have resulted among these groups as they conduct terrorist operations. This is consistent with other findings that indicate that a decrease in group size and an increase in the number of "lone wolves" among single issue and right wing terrorist groups make it more difficult for law enforcement agencies to engage in prevention or early intervention. (pp. 36-37)

Although the uniqueness of the offending patterns and the structure of far-right extremists are challenging, these obstacles highlight potential investigation strategies that could be used to prevent or solve criminal acts. Hamm (2005) stressed that far-right extremists often come into contact with law enforcement in the normal course of crime investigations because of their failures, because of the types of crimes they commit, and because of their inability to silence members who become informants. Importantly, he emphasized that “their greatest failure has been the showcasing of imagery and style,” calling it “their Achilles heel” (p. viii). Their public persona, dress, and participation in open, extremist activities (such as gun shows, racist music festivals, and other racist gatherings) make such groups vulnerable to undercover infiltration. After public interest in extremist far-right paramilitary groups grew, law enforcement was quick to connect such groups to a number of crimes. Many of the most significant arrests of militia members in the mid-1990s, such as the arrests of Washington State Militia members, resulted from law enforcement undercover work. Future research must clearly specify issues related to mobility because this finding clearly illustrates the importance of strengthening the intelligence capabilities of local and state law enforcement agencies. Such intelligence must also be shared with law enforcement agencies in other geographic locations and in other branches and jurisdictions of government.

GOING BEYOND TERRORISM TO FOCUS ON ALL IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED CRIMES

Another issue focuses on the dependent variable, or what crimes and terrorism acts law enforcement training should concentrate on. The FBI (1997) defines *terrorism* as “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.” Although this approach is beneficial—because it establishes clear boundaries for the dependent variable and only the federal government has guidelines on terrorism—it systematically omits a large number of crimes committed by supporters of the domestic far right.

First, the FBI’s definition of terrorism systematically excludes crimes committed by lone individuals. Ideologically motivated racist murders committed by a lone skinhead, for example, and attacks against abortion clinics are excluded from the FBI’s terrorism cases. Indeed, this is why the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and not the FBI reports many crimes committed at abortion clinics. Riley and Hoffman’s RAND study (1995) concluded that the FBI’s terrorism definition was too narrow and that most state and local municipalities subscribed to a broader definition—one that encompassed, for example, hate crimes perpetrated by skinheads and other White supremacist gangs (see also Blee, 2005).

Second, the FBI’s definition requires that an act comprise “force or violence” to be included in its universe of cases. Thus, all nonviolent ideologically motivated crimes are systematically excluded. This omission is significant because our recent literature review (Freilich et al., 2006) demonstrates that supporters of the domestic far right have committed a large number of nonviolent crimes, violations of regulatory laws, and other infractions. This review found that far-right extremists have been investigated by federal and state authorities and are involved in a variety of criminal acts, violent and nonviolent, as well as ideological and nonideological/routine crimes and illegal activities, as perpetrated by lone wolves, multiple perpetrators, and organized groups.

Academics and law enforcement should therefore examine all known crimes involving far-right extremists, regardless of jurisdiction. Most studies on far-right extremism and terrorism, however, exclude many of the above incidents (e.g., taxes, false liens, and financial schemes) because they do not fit the FBI's narrow definition of terrorism. Thus ignored by most terrorism researchers is a significant amount of criminal activity that could help them frame the problem such that legitimate and effective strategies be used to address other significant criminal problems.

McGarell, Freilich, and Chermak (2007) argue that effective law enforcement strategies and training would ignore the terrorism label and instead focus on the perpetrator's ideology: Was the perpetrator of the incident at issue a supporter of the domestic far right when the crime was committed? This alternative approach would group all crimes committed by far rightists: terrorist and nonterrorist (including preparatory crimes), federal and state, non-violent and violent, ideological and routine (i.e., nonideological). Such information would greatly aid law enforcement's understanding of the extent and scope of criminal activities of domestic extremists within the United States. It is unknown how active such extremists have been; whether divergent crimes covary on the micro or macro level; how these patterns have changed over time; whether certain crimes precede others on the micro or macro level; whether there are individual or regional variations in activity; and whether comparisons of criminal activity exist by group type, ideology, or organizing characteristics.

Observers caution that because of the far right's belief system (centered on an intense distrust of authority), law enforcement must be vigilant when dealing with members of the movement, even in seemingly minor and mundane situations. For example, some far rightists refuse to follow driving regulations (and drive with out licenses or insurance) and therefore become involved in minor traffic violations with law enforcement—a situation that is unlikely to fall into most terrorism universes. Pitcavage (1998) notes that a 1997 study by the Southern Poverty Law Center found that 5% of criminal incidents involving extremists from 1994 to 1996 began as spontaneous confrontations with law enforcement, usually through basic traffic stops. Jensen and Hsieh (1999) advise law enforcement agents to be on guard for telltale signs of extremist individuals—for example, "driving in vehicles without license plates or with plates not issued by a legitimate licensing authority" (p. 5). Missing vehicle registration or no driver's license may indicate a deep mistrust toward state authority and a willingness to take violent action against its seemingly sinister representatives.

A carefully constructed training curriculum on far-right extremism must focus on driving violations, traffic stops, and successfully managing potentially violent situations, such as serving an arrest warrant at a far rightist's home. Pitcavage (1998), the founder of the Militia Watchdog Web site and the director of fact finding for the Anti-Defamation League, offers a comprehensive listing of indicators that may inform law enforcement that they have pulled over an antigovernment radical. In addition to strange license plates or none at all, signs include objections to requests for registration or licenses, on the basis that the subject is not driving a commercial vehicle; peculiar antigovernment or biblical bumper stickers; strange comments, such as the driver's referring to oneself as a sovereign citizen and referencing contracts; the handing out of antigovernment literature; identification that indicates that the driver is a member of a strange-sounding "law enforcement" agency; and an attempt to videotape the encounter. Of course, identifying such far-right extremists is only the first step (Begert, 1998). Officers must also coolly assess the situation, be on guard for concealed weapons, politely refuse to engage in political and philosophical discussions, and attempt to

defuse any tension through humanization, saying such things as “You may be right. I don’t know, but I’m just doing my job, you know? I get in trouble if I don’t give you this ticket.”

The Anti-Defamation League (2007) also discusses how visiting extremists at their homes can be particularly explosive. This officer safety bulletin discusses three issues that contribute to the unpredictability of these situations: First, in believing that they have an absolute right to do what they want with their own property, extremists may be especially agitated under these circumstances. Second, they may have fortified the location by stockpiling weapons, ammunition, and supplies. Third, a standoff, if it occurs, can become a rallying cry for other extremists.

Successful training programs can include such situations in their curricula, alert officers to the possibility of escalation, and discuss scenarios that include potential responses. The Anti-Defamation League (2007) emphasizes, for example, the need to make accurate threat assessments and prioritize written and verbal threats as important indicators of potentially dangerous confrontations. Patience is important, and programs should use multiple examples of standoffs that were resolved peacefully and violently. Finally, law enforcement might consider communicating with other key extremists in the community to assist with a confrontation and perhaps provide an opportunity for the targeted extremist to save face.

CONCLUSION

Empirical research on terrorism has had limited influence on current policy and practice (Merari, 1991). A key question is how to integrate this growing body of research into existent and future training procedures. Quality training for law enforcement personnel is central to building a capacity to prepare, respond, and recover from terrorism. The federal government has responded to this challenge and has invested significant resources in this effort. Indeed, the amount and type of available programs are impressive, and new training programs are constantly being developed. Our overview of training for law enforcement in terrorism indicates that a large number of training programs are available to federal, state, and local police agencies; that various agencies provide training; and that the number of training programs on international terrorism far outnumbers domestic terrorism programs.

The focus on Islamic terrorism was not in error considering the significance of the September 11 attacks, but training offerings should be broadened, particularly in regard to the potential of far-right extremism. First, domestic terrorists in general and far-right extremists in particular pose a significant threat to public safety. Research indicates that the far right must be considered a significant threat to carry out a chemical or radiological attack as well as disrupt the nation’s food or water supply with an act of agroterrorism. Second, additional training on domestic terrorism must be developed to enhance law enforcement’s understanding and response to these groups; this training should be based on the best knowledge and practices available, as demonstrated by empirical evidence. Although empirical findings trickle into current training, law enforcement must implement a process that allows for the consistent inclusion of current research that pertains to best practices. Indeed, integrating empirical research and training would not only enhance the quality of training but also increase academics’ understanding of this subject matter—specifically, training that promotes a better understanding of the nuances of the structure, ideology, and tactics of far right groups; uses a broad definition of terrorism to identify and better understand the nature of the domestic terrorism threat; and attempts to understand the potential unintended consequences of a

counterterrorism strategy. Such training would significantly improve how law enforcement thinks about the far right as a terrorist threat and how it responds to it. Safety in the United States would be greatly increased if such practices were implemented.

NOTE

1. Defining the domestic far right is not easy, because there is no universally accepted definition and prior research has not sufficiently addressed this issue. To formulate a description, we drew on a systematic review of studies published on far-right extremism in general and its association with political crimes in particular, including important works that offered typologies, definitions, and descriptions (e.g., Barkun, 1989; Berlet & Lyons, 2000; Coates, 1995; Duffy & Brantley, 1997; Durham, 2003; Kaplan, 1993, 1995; Mullins, 1988; Smith, 1994; Sprinzak, 1995; see also Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 1997; Weinberg, 1993). As such, the domestic far right is composed of individuals or groups that subscribe to aspects of the following ideals: They are fiercely nationalistic (as opposed to universal and international), antiglobal, suspicious of centralized federal authority, and reverent of individual liberty (especially, their right to own guns and be free of taxes). They believe in conspiracy theories that involve a grave threat to national sovereignty and/or personal liberty. They believe that one's personal and/or national way of life is under attack and that it is already lost or the threat is imminent (for some, such beliefs are amorphous and vague; for others, the threat is from a ethnic, racial, or religious group). Finally, they believe in the need to be prepared for an attack—by participating in paramilitary preparations or training and survivalism, for example. Note that mainstream conservative movements and the Christian right are not included. Our ongoing research will allow us to refine this definition and build directly on the extant literature offering general typologies and descriptions.

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Steven M. Chermak is a professor in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. His research interests include domestic terrorism, identifying effective strategies for reducing crime and violence, policing, and media coverage of crime and justice. His current research projects include an examination of the life course of far-right extremist groups, state police estimates of the threat of terrorism in the United States, and a project to examine the intelligence practices of state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

Joshua D. Freilich is an associate professor in the criminal justice department and the deputy executive officer of the criminal justice doctoral program at the Graduate Center, both of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York. He is a lead investigator of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, a Center of Excellence of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. He is a principal investigator (with Steven Chermak, Michigan State University) of the U.S. Extremist Crime Database study, a large-scale data collection effort that is building the first of its kind: a relational database of all crimes committed by far-right extremists in the United States, from 1990 to the present, reported in an open source.

Zachary Shemtob is an adjunct professor and doctoral student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York City. He has a master's degree in criminal justice from John Jay and a bachelor's degree in philosophy, economics, history, and government from Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. His research interests include political jurisprudence, legal theory, and domestic and international terrorism.